

July 20, 2000

DIVERSITY ADVISORY BOARD CHARTER

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive sets a Diversity Advisory Board (DAB) Charter and defines the scope of the Board's function.

2. BACKGROUND

a. The DAB is a field and Headquarters advisory group established to address issues affecting diversity in the work place.

b. In April 1993, the Under Secretary for Health established an Advisory Committee on Diversity which is now renamed the Diversity Advisory Board.

c. Definition for VHA purposes: Diversity equals those human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet present in other individuals and groups. Diversity includes everyone; it is not something that is defined by race or gender. It extends to age, personal and corporate background, education, function and personality. It also includes lifestyle, sexual and/or affectional orientation, geographic origin, physical abilities and/or qualities, tenure with the organization, exempt or no-nexempt status and management or non-management status.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy for the DAB to assist and advise the Under Secretary for Health and key VHA senior management staff regarding issues affecting cultural diversity in the work place, thus ensuring VHA becomes an employer of choice by:

a. Increasing awareness and sensitivity about diversity in the VHA workforce through dissemination and coordination of information (i.e., training, statistics, terminology, etc.).

b. Serving as a resource to VHA managers in the promotion of cultural diversity.

c. Identifying challenges to advancement of underrepresented employees (i.e., mobility, education, experience) and developing programs or initiatives to address the challenges and change paradigms.

4. ACTION

a. **Board Activities.** The DAB's activities will include:

(1) Planning and implementing of diversity initiatives.

(2) Communicating between the field operations and VHA Headquarters.

(3) Conducting education and training initiatives.

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(4) Identifying and presenting issues to the Under Secretary for Health via an annual briefing, or on an as-needed basis.

(5) Administering an annual awards program through a selection of nominations received from field facilities and providing winning facilities with medical care training funds.

b. Membership and Terms

(1) The DAB will consist of 18 members selected on the basis of high professional achievement; they will consist of a balanced culturally diverse group of individuals. **NOTE:** *All members will be from VHA Headquarters and field facilities.*

(2) The Under Secretary for Health will designate a chairperson and vice-chairperson. **NOTE:** *At the time the chairperson rotates off the board, the vice chairperson will assume the chair position and a new vice chair will be designated. The chair will then become an ex-officio member and will serve for one additional year.*

(3) Members will be appointed for a three-year term, limited to two terms, or as determined by the Under Secretary for Health, to ensure ongoing new membership and with possible participation by other organizations within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(4) Selection of Board members will be through an application process, to be announced. The DAB reviews applications and recommends selections to the chairperson for consideration and then to the Under Secretary for Health for approval.

c. Meetings

(1) The DAB will meet quarterly, or at the call of the chairperson. **NOTE:** *Regular meeting times and dates will be scheduled at the beginning of each year in order to facilitate attendance.*

(2) Conference calls will be held monthly, times and dates will be scheduled at the beginning of each year in order to facilitate attendance.

(3) Attendance at the meetings by non-members is at the direction of the chairperson.

(4) It is each member's responsibility to stay fully informed of Board activities when meetings or conference calls are missed.

d. Quorum and Voting

(1) A quorum will be considered when a simple majority of members is present.

(2) Recommendations to be presented to the Under Secretary for Health will be passed by a simple majority of the members.

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e. **Administrative Management**

(1) The preparation of the agenda and minutes for all DAB meetings are the responsibility of the chairperson.

(2) Members will be required to carryout other functions at the request of the chairperson.

(3) Funding to support travel and other Board activities will be requested during the VHA Headquarters consolidated budget call.

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Chairperson, Diversity Advisory Board (10B2) is responsible for the contents of this Directive.

7. RESCISSIONS: None. This VHA Directive expires July 31, 2005.

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